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ANNUS MIRABILIS.

A Poem

DELIVERED AT

THE FORTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PHILOLEXIAN SOCIETY OF
COLUMBIA COLLEGE,

BY

THOMAS P. ST. JOHN.
"



PUBLISHED FOR THE SOCIETY.

1848.

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a.m. 5 June 1848. 1/29

Philolexian Society,
Columbia College, May, 1848.

THOMAS P. ST. JOHN, Esq.

Dear Sir,

It is with great pleasure that we inform you, we have been appointed a Committee of the Philolexian Society to solicit of you a copy of your admirably written Poem, delivered at the recent Anniversary of that body, for immediate publication. The commendations that it universally elicited, and the numerous applications that have been made to us individually and through letter, to entreat your consent to the request stated above, fully justify us, we think, in this effort to place it before the public. Trusting you will favour us with a reply as soon as convenient,

We remain,

With feelings of true regard,
Your friends and brother Philolexians,

W. H. TERRY,
WM. MORROW KNOX,
H. DE C. HANNERS.

Philolexian Society,
Columbia College, June 7, 1848.

Gentlemen,

The high opinion which you seem to entertain of my trifling production, affords me unfeigned pleasure. I was exceedingly surprised at your request, as I had never for a moment imagined that the Poem was of sufficient consequence to have merited, after its delivery, even a second thought. Since, however, it appears to be the wish of the Society to confer upon me this undeserved honour, I, although reluctant, accede to their request.

I am, Gentlemen,

With sincere respect,
Your obd't Servant,

THOMAS P. ST. JOHN.

To William H. Terry,
William Morrow Knox,
Henry De C. Hanners.

} Committee, &c.

TO

WILLIAM H. TERRY,

MY BROTHER PHILOLEXIAN

AND FRIEND,

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS INSCRIBED,

AS A SLIGHT TESTIMONIAL OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP

AND REGARD.



A N N U S M I R A B I L I S.

THERE comes no Muse, to aid me in my task,
Though simple rhyme is all the boon I ask.
Too oft have poets, in this modern day,
Who build the lofty rhyme and fragile lay,
On Inspiration called, invoked the Nine
To aid their labours with a power divine.
Men who portentous volumes still indite,
As each preceding sinks to endless night ;
And still harmonious fustian will unfold
Of sun-gods, genius, lutes, and love untold—
But since it's *fashion* in these modern days,
That every aspirant for poetic bays,
On Pegasean courser who would tower,
Should claim assistance of some magic power,

I must do so. Whom, then, shall I invite,
To aid me these few wand'ring lines indite ?
I turn despairing, hope almost resign—
Propitious chance shows me a dentist's sign.
Thee I invoke, thou matchless Chloroform,
Let thy bright visions o'er my senses swarm ;
Yet, blessed invention, while o'er me you creep,
Do not, I pray, put all the rest to sleep ;
Explain to me the various novel shows
Which every day and every hour disclose ;
Nor need abroad for any instance roam—
Steal a brief glance at men and things at home.
Lo ! Science nurtured with a fostering hand,
Throughout our town, throughout the entire land ;
Professors on professors pass in crowds,
Enfold themselves and audience in clouds.
Some praise Phrenology ; another schism
Vaunts the deep mysteries of Mesmerism ;
While their sweet tones and elocution's charms,
Put the whole audience in Morpheus' arms.
Patients in placid stupor lie, while knives,
Needles, and pins, the heartless sceptic drives
Half through their numbed and senseless arms,—
They feel no wound, so powerful the charms.
None knew a test, till scientific men
Found a sure wakener in *Cayenne.*

Behold the reign of Taste ;—Do not we court
 In every way the Muse, her votaries support ?
 Is not the Opera fostered by us ? Psha !
 I mispronounce the term, the Opera-h !
 Condemn our Taste :—Has not the passion
 For unknown tongues in late years been the fashion ?
 'Tis so across the sea ; 'tis therefore right—
 We must endure, not comprehend the sight.
 What though in blank amazement we may sit,
 Laugh over tragedy, and weep at wit,
 Before our eyes and widely opened, lay
 Neat-bound editions of Rossini's play.
 We praise the mighty actor ; who but sees
 The force he throws in thrilling passages ?
 Praise, too, the poet's beauty, chasteness, grace—
 Look on the book,—we're praising the wrong place.

If mirthful Momus doth beguile the hour,
 A sickly smile rewards the actor's power ;
 If Pathos melts us with its influence brief,
 One slight grimace must signify our grief.
 When some bright star, or music-loving dame,
 Of shrieking voice and hexsyllabic name,
 In piercing tones the very roof has cleft,
 Then right hand longs to run and meet the left.
 Then bursts applause in great or less degree.

Good gets *brava*, best has *bravissime*.

Look at all else the town affords, and then
Look at the men, or things that should be men ;
Creatures who mar the human form divine,
And glide about, a moving tailor's sign.
In times gone by, before our age began,
It took nine tailors to produce one man ;
The law was true, it held good then,
But now one tailor will produce nine men.
See the pert coxcomb where he gaily flaunts
In broided vesting and De Meyer pants ;
A coat with lengthened waist drawn down behind,
Whose six-inch skirt sails freely in the wind ;
A hat from Leary's in small space contains
The little compass of the fopling's brains ;
A stand-up collar's most stupendous height
Shields half his countenance from sight ;
His ear above—its quadrupedal size
Mortal invention to conceal defies ;
Hair decks his face,—what brains he has to spare
Assiduously employed in cultivating hair.
Such are the creatures who on sunny day
Loiter an hour in classical Broadway ;
Ape all the faults of all the foreign nations,
Sublimely swear, converse in French quotations.

Ladies, exult ! the time is coming soon,
 When you shall claim a long-expected boon :—
 Your sex, oppressed by tyranny so long,
 Shall soon arise, revenge its bitter wrong ;
 No more be stigmatised as “ weaker sex,”
 Whose only office is your lords to vex
 With petty ailments, continual complaints,
 Galvanic nerves, hysterick fits and faints !
 Behold the dawning of a wished-for power—
 Soon shall roll round the long-awaited hour.
 Lo ! antiquated spinsters lead the van,
 And rail against the insolence of man ;
 Degenerate man has lost the right to sway—
 Let woman rule in this enlightened day ;
 Hold every place, divide the loaves and fishes,
 And servile man stay home to wash the dishes,
 Look to the house affairs (his proper station),
 While wives discuss the matters of the nation.

Oh, Sovereign Ruler of the human mind,
 In every age companion of mankind,
 Celestial humbug—thee I name in song,
 To thee all praises from our race belong !
 Thine only is the envied power which can
 Point out the way to gull our fellow-man ;
 Here is thy cherished haunt—our favoured town

Feels thy full power, nor ever heeds its frown.
 See where thy temple on its outer walls
 Hangs forth the banner—to its votaries calls,
 Beneath whose dome in labelled cases hang
 Mermaid and monkey, and ourang outang !
 Every sea-monster, from leviathan to shark,
 And every beast that entered Noah's ark ;
 Mummies ten thousand years of age,
 And Daniel Lambert in a monstrous cage ;
 - Nor less the living wonders greet the eye,
 Natural phenomena of every dye :—
 Every invention that the public cozens :—
 Sagacious dogs, prodigious pigs by dozens,
 Ohio fat girls whom no scales can weigh,
 Thin men who ballast lest they blow away ;
 Tall men and short men in succession come,
 From eight feet giants down to Thomas Thumb !
 There is her home—upon those classic floors
 Humbug each day her horn of plenty pours,
 And radiating thence each passing hour,
 Strengthens her rule, and spreads her wondrous power.

List to the deadly strife that doctors wage,
 Which shall rule first and most assist the age ;
 Their guns are bottles, balls the deadly pill,
 Like copper bullets, warranted to kill !

Self-made physicians and regular M. D.'s,
 (Irate disciples of Hippocrates,)
 The different *pathies* all contend in strife,
 Their end the same—to shorten human life !
 Each presses onward, each puts in his plea,
 But who'll decide when doctors disagree ?
 Each vaunts his potion and all-healing pills,
 Each kills his man, and then presents his bills.

The stage demands the tribute of my lay—
 Humbug e'en here rules with despotic sway.
 Each mouthing player from a foreign strand
 Receives a welcome at her generous hand,
 And through her aid, the man of fits and starts
 Curdles our blood, and melts in turn our hearts.
 The one that's latest is the best e'er seen
 Since Garrick, Kemble, or the Elder Kean.
 Forgotten now by all, see classic play
 To gaping farce or melo-drame give way ;
 Neglected Shakspeare on the shelf is put,
 While *Mosey* fights, and *Sykesy* takes the butt !

See in the world of letters, there its might
 Claims peerless sway, asserts a well-earned right.
 Glance at the last new novel—I'll not ask
 You to peruse—that were indeed a task.

All planned by rule, and conned as 'twere by rote,
 Cut to a measure, as they'd cut a coat,—
 A haunted castle in some gloomy dell,
 An aged man who has a tale to tell,
 A gentle mother, a hard-hearted sire,
 A generous uncle, (although prone to ire,)
 A sighing maiden, pierced by Cupid's dart,
 A Byron lover with a blighted heart !
 When gathering dangers every one appal,
 Some laughing Bobadil, who rescues all,
 A dark-browed villain with a soul of flame,
 Who in the end, King Richard-like, dies game
 Such sweet effusions novelists compose,
 And vend by wholesale, fifty cents a dose.

Come on with me—with admiration mark
 The throng of loveliness that fills the Park.
 A statesman there now holds his thronged levee,
 While ladies crowd his reverend form to see.
 Oh, novel sight ! a poor old man stands there,
 Jostled and crowded 'midst the thronging fair,
 While eager faces press around in flocks,
 And sharpened scissors shred his scanty locks.
 Nor are his garments safe—some even dare
 Cut at his coat, as they have cut his hair ;
 While others spare his hoary locks and suit,

To claim the privilege of a salute,
 Marshall themselves as colonels place dragoons,
 Make kissing war, and fire in small platoons.
 Oh, happy lot of glory ! where's the man
 Will now scorn greatness, when be great he can.

An office now no candidate shall fill,
 Unless he have his fairer friends' good will ;
 Yet were indeed no laurels to be won,
 Just for excitement bachelors would run !
 If in the canvas one should chance to die,
 His epitaph might say, and not as often lie,
 A would-be statesman yielded here his breath,
 Destroyed by kindness, fairly kissed to death !
 It then is truth (deny it no one can),
 Man rules the world, but woman rules the man.

But soft—I wake ! burst is the magic spell—

The chloroform departs—“ Enchantress, fare thee well !”

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